

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

and of John R. Rice

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20.

An Independent Religious Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, His Blood Atonement, Salvation by Faith, New Testament Soul Winning and the Premillennial Return of Christ. Opposes Sin, Modernism, and Denominational Overlordship

VOLUME V, No. 22

DALLAS, TEXAS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1938

Office: 207 So. Beckley St., Phone 6-6888

A Call To Fast and Pray

Sunday, December 18th, all day services for prayer and fasting will be held at Sunset and Tyler, the present meeting place of the Fundamental Baptist Church, John R. Rice, pastor. After the morning sermon, the congregation will be dismissed about 12:00. Those who wish to leave may do so and then those who wish to spend a part or all of the afternoon in prayer will remain. There will be no lunch served at the church, of course. We plan to spend the time seeking God's face. There will be some praises, some confessions of sins, some Scripture, and a great deal of praying. We will make our requests, agree upon them when we can, and then have united prayer. Then other requests will be made and as we agree, we will pray. Friends of other congregations are invited to join us. We will pray for help about our building, will pray for victory over sin, will pray for soul-winning power, the power of the Holy Spirit, or in others words, we will pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We will pray for sinners by name.

Those who attend may leave at any time. The service will continue as long as we feel clearly led. When those present seem satisfied, we will go home. If any wish to remain until the evening service begins, they may do so. Those who wish to join us in fasting and prayer but cannot attend the services, may pray at home or in groups either in homes or in churches. We hope that individuals and groups who wish to join us will let us know what you are praying for so we may unite with you in prayer as God leads and that you will join in prayer to God for us. We are anxious for money to rebuild our church building to be sure, but far more, we are concerned about a great revival in the church. We want to repent of our sins and be filled with the Holy Spirit so we may win souls. We want new workers, new vision and direct leadership from God.

Those who wish to attend the service by street car may come out Jefferson to Tyler Street in Oak Cliff and then walk one short block north.

Sunday School will be at 9:30 a. m., preaching at 10:45. Young People's meeting and men's prayer meeting both begin at 6:45 and the evening song service and evangelistic service begin at 7:30 with pastor John R. Rice preaching morning and night. Adults are

Heart-Warming Letters

Letters have come from a number of people who said they could scarcely read for the tears when *The Sword of the Lord* came telling about the loss of our tabernacle by fire.

For years now we have gone on sowing beside all waters, getting out the gospel every way possible by paper, by tracts, by printed sermons, by radio, by open air revivals, by Bible Schools, by preaching in jails, on street corners, in parks, seeking in the words of Paul, "That I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). How sweet it is to find that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. Now we learn that literally tens of thousands of people have been inspired and blessed through the varied and sacrificial ministry of our church.

Brother Joe Scheumack telephoned from Fort Worth his most kindly words of sympathy. I forgot to mention his call last week.

A country church in south Texas, where I preached in several services last summer and where God gave a blessed time of reviving with a good many saved, sent an offering of \$5.00. Here in Dallas a little church where we have sometimes preached, also sent an offering of \$5.00. The Bible Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Rev. H. C. Ownbey, pastor, sent an offering of \$9.05. From Binghamton, New York, the Park Avenue Baptist Church sent resolutions of sympathy and offered prayer for us.

The Gospel Radiators' Bible Class of the Burton Avenue Baptist Church, Waterloo, Iowa, sent an offering of \$25.00 and a most kindly letter. Another letter came from Waterloo, sending the Thanksgiving offering from five different churches that held a joint Thanksgiving meeting. Letters have come from Dr. W. B. Riley of Minneapolis, Dr. Walter L. Wilson of Kansas City, Dr. Wm. A. Matthews, President of the Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary, have written.

Dr. Harold Strathearn of the Interstate Evangelistic Association, Rochester, wrote and sent an offering.

From Paris, Texas, a widow writes,

"Words cannot express my deep sorrow to you in the loss of your church home. My heart was melted, humbled, as I read *The Sword of the Lord*. In-

especially invited to the pastor's large Bible class. Assistant pastor Joe B. Rice will be present, taking up his work.

deed it was a great loss. But praise the Lord, Romans 8:28 holds good for today. Our God is still on His throne. He lives — He loves — He answers prayer. He built the tabernacle that burned and, praise His name, He is abundantly able to build another one that will bring forth more abundant blessings to the church and greater glory to His name! May God give faith and courage and grace to your church family and friends everywhere."

She inclosed \$1.00.

Among our own members here in Dallas, the Fundamental Baptist Church, we solicit a sacrificial love offering for the building program to be brought in by January 1st. Others whose hearts God touches may have a part in this blessed work. It is His, not ours. Every offering will be carefully recorded and a receipt sent. Every penny will be carefully used to the glory of God as thriftily as possible.

Why Fast and Pray?

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD SOMETIMES LEAVE OFF FOOD, SLEEP, NICE CLOTHES, FAMILY LIFE OR OTHER COMFORTS TO PRAY AND DO NOTHING BUT PRAY

BY JOHN R. RICE

The greatest saints of God throughout the Bible often fasted. Fasting is often connected with whole-hearted prayer, with mourning, with repentance, with seeking deliverance from enemies or wisdom from above. Moses fasted forty days on Mount Sinai and our Saviour fasted forty days in the wilderness. The Bible tells how Joshua, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, the disciples of John the Baptist, Anna, the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, and others fasted and prayed. Saints of God got their prayers answered when they waited on God with fastings and prayer. Since Bible times the greatest men of prayer have oftentimes fasted as well as prayed. A Christian is in good company when he fasts and prays.

During the earthly ministry of Christ, the disciples of John the Baptist fasted, the Pharisees fasted, and naturally inquiries were made concerning the disciples of our Saviour. Jesus answered,

"Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:34, 35).

So the Saviour not only fasted; He also taught His disciples to fast, and they did fast after He was taken away.

The only restriction that our Saviour put upon fasting is that it was to be sincere. Men should not disfigure their faces to appear unto men to fast. A boastful, self-righteous flaunting of religious ceremonies such as that practiced by the Pharisees, hypocrites in the days of our Lord, is offensive to God, to be sure. But hypocrisy in anything else is a sin as truly as in the case of fasting. Christians should not fast as hypocrites, but they certainly should fast like Jesus fasted, like Paul fasted, like Barnabas and many others.

1. What Is Fasting and Prayer?

Fasting is such a lost art, so lit-

tle practiced, so little taught, that we need to consider here what is the meaning of fasting. How does fasting add to prayer? Does it mean simply to abstain from food? Is there virtue in fasting when we do not pray? What is the spiritual significance of fasting?

First, fasting means putting God first. There are times when one ought to eat and praise God for the food as did David when he said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits . . . Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:2, 5). Sometimes eating is the will of God. There are times also when it pleases God for His child to quietly and trustfully lie down to sleep, laying aside all his burdens and sweetly resting in the arms of God's care. "He giveth his beloved sleep" (Psa. 127:2). David could say, "I laid me down and slept; I waked; for the Lord sustained me" (Psa. 3:5). There are times when men should enjoy the pleasures of family life. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13:4). We are told that, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17). Let us enjoy the blessings of God, whether food or drink or rest or Christian fellowship, or home life, or service. Let us give God the glory for them all. But certainly there are times when we should turn our back upon everything else in the world but seeking the face of God. Such times should be times of fasting and prayer.

Fasting, then, should mean that one determines to seek the face of God and for a time, at least, to abstain from other things in order to give the whole heart to prayer and waiting on God. Fasting and prayer means to leave off the lesser blessings for the greater one, the lesser duty for the far more important duty. There are times when

tunity to subscribe for *The Sword of the Lord* for as many years as you like at the low price of 50c a year, or three years for \$1.00.

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Send your Christmas subscriptions at once. If you request it, we will mail a card announcing your gift. Send orders to *The Sword of the Lord*, 207 South Beckley, Dallas, Texas.

Come, Ye Disconsolate

By Thomas Moore

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er you languish;
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your anguish;
'Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.'

"Joy of the comfortless, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure;
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
'Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot cure.'

"Here see the Bread of Life, see waters flowing
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above;
Come to the feast of love, come, ever knowing
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove."

(What Comfort For the Sorrowing!)

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Why Fast and Pray?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (I Cor. 7:5). The spirit of fasting simply means that one, for the time being, is willing to abstain from otherwise normal and proper duties or pleasures, that he may give himself wholly to the business of prayer. So fasting is really putting God first when you pray, wanting God more than one wants food, more than one wants sleep, more than one wants fellowship with others, more than one wants to attend to business. How could a Christian ever know that God was first in his life, if he did not sometimes turn aside from every other duty and pleasure to give himself wholly to seeking the face of God?

There are many other occasions in life when men do without food. At a football training table, men gladly deprive themselves of sweets and certain foods likely to hinder mental alertness and physical fitness and endurance. Should we do less for Jesus Christ? One can run a race better if he has not eaten just beforehand. Swimmers well know that it is dangerous to eat much before swimming lest they suffer from cramps. Public speakers and singers customarily do not eat in the evening until after the important period of concentration and perfect control necessary for their public appearance. If I can preach better without eating, then why can't I pray better without eating? If a business man can concentrate better on his figures, in some emergency, without having his stomach loaded with food, then why cannot a Christian pray better, when all his energies are given to that one thing? When men are wholly absorbed in grief for a loved one, they are not hungry; they do not want to eat. Then when one is wholly absorbed in passionate and most earnest prayer, why should they not be glad to do without food?

In truth, when Christians fast it is often true that they simply do not want to eat; they have no desire for food. Many, many times I have been so busy about the Lord's work, and so absorbed in it that I had no taste for food. Fasting simply means putting God first in a very intense way, for a period of time and for very definite purposes.

Second, fasting means persistence in prayer. We may pray often, but most of us do not pray much. Our prayers are transitory, indefinite and brief. On the other hand, to fast and pray simply means that one settles down to the business of praying, with a persistence that will take no denial. The widow who haunted the unjust judge with her persistent pleading that he avenge her of her adversary (Luke 18:3), probably neglected her house work while she did it and possibly did not eat! I suppose even the unjust judge did not get to enjoy his food or his rest, so steadily did she pursue him with her urges! Real persistence in prayer, letting other things go by and giving God the right of way, often involves fasting. In fact, I think there is little point to fasting or depriving ourselves of other things, simply as a matter of self punishment, if we do not pray. If a man is to be just as absorbed in business as

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Give Books That Make The Bible Live

What Christmas Means

This is the season of gifts and has been since God, out of a heart of love, gave His great gift, His only begotten Son. Let us remember those who cannot give in return, those who are in need, and the greatest need today is the Gospel message. No greater gift can be given than one that will be a testimony to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, whose birth we are commemorating.

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Really this book is all that the title claims. It has blessed many, many lives. A number of our recent Bible School visitors and friends told how *Streams* is a blessing to them each day. Some of them have used it for years and read it along with their Bibles and find it new and fresh each time it is read. Below is given the daily reading for November 29th.

"Nevertheless afterwards" (Heb. 12:11).

There is a legend that tells of a German baron who, at his castle on the Rhine, stretched wires from tower to tower, that the winds might convert them into an Aeolian harp. And the soft breezes played about the castle, but no music was born. But one night there arose a great tempest, and hill and castle were smitten by the fury of the mighty winds. The baron went to the threshold to look out upon the terror of the storm, and the Aeolian harp was filling the air with strains that rang out even above the clamor of the tempest. It needed the tempest to bring out the music! And have we not known men whose lives have not given out any entrancing music in the day of a calm prosperity, but who, when the tempest drove against them have astonished their fellows by the power and strength of their music?

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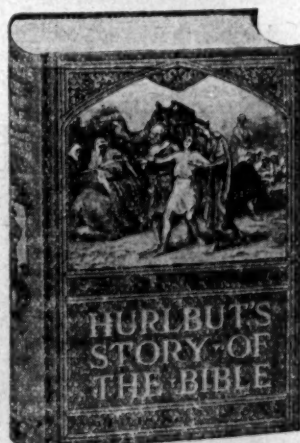
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THE SWORD OF THE LORD and of John R. Rice

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WHY FAST AND PRAY?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

ever, with no more thought for God, then what good would it do him, spiritually, to do without food, or drink or sleep? Fasting is the accompaniment of persistent, fervent prayer that will not be denied!

Third, fasting is the deliberate clearing of the way for prayer, laying aside weights and hindrances. In Hebrews 12:1 we are commanded: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Since it is faith that the Holy Spirit is speaking about, and since all the holy examples and witnesses given were men of persistent, faithful prayer, we surely will make no mistake to interpret this verse as a command to lay aside hindrances to prayer. "Lay aside every weight." Eating may be good in its place, but certainly sometimes it is a weight that holds down our prayers. Sleep may sometimes be proper but doubtless many, many times Christians sleep when they ought to be praying. Business in itself may be proper and sometimes men ought to do with their might what their hands find to do, but business, "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22). Fasting is simply laying aside every weight, every hindrance to prayer. A Christian ought to be willing, as often as necessary, to abstain from anything that hinders getting the answer to his prayers, to wait on God until everything that hides the face of God is removed, waiting before God until really he gets the full assurance that his prayer is heard and will be answered to the glory of Christ! When we fast and pray we are simply trying to sincerely lay aside anything that hinders our prayers.

Fourth, to fast when we pray ought to be simply claiming the answer to our prayers. To fast when we pray should mean "I have set myself to seek God as long as necessary and as earnestly as necessary until He hears me and answers me." It requires faith to pray for "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Then it requires more faith to fast when we pray. Fasting pictures greater desire, greater determination, and greater faith. One who fasts thereby signifies his sincerity and his confidence that God can be reached, and that God will answer and bless his sincerity and definiteness and willingness to know and do the will of God. Prayer is too often a shallow thing, a light and insincere thing, with Christians. That is surely one reason why so many, many prayers are never answered. Fasting, then, should be simply an evidence of our earnestness, our fervor, our faith.

Fifth, fasting is very properly an expression of mourning. When people are overwhelmed with sorrow, they often do not eat. They have no desire for food, they could not enjoy it. Sometimes when people are overwhelmed with grief, the body will not digest food. Nature itself teaches that fasting is the proper accompaniment and expression of mourning.

In the Bible we have many examples of fasting as an expression

of grief. David fasted while he wept over the first child of Bathsheba, when the babe was smitten by the Lord (II Samuel 12:16, 21). The same spirit must have animated Samuel when he "cried unto the Lord all night" in grief over the rejection of Saul (I Samuel 15:11). That was the spirit of fasting, though the word is not used in that passage. The men of Nineveh fasted, with sackcloth and ashes, a symbol of the deepest mourning (Jonah 3:5-7). As people feast at weddings and other occasions of rejoicing, so they fast at occasions of mourning. Thus the Saviour said that when the Bridegroom was taken away His disciples should fast. Hence, those who are in sorrow do well sometimes to fast as they seek the comfort of God's face. Those who have sinned and grieve in penitence, do well to fast as they turn their hearts from sin and confess their failures and faults and try to make restitution. Fasting fits exactly with repentance and with sorrow for sin.

II. Things We Can Get By Fasting And Prayer

Fasting is an aid and adjunct of prayer. Some things never come to a child of God "but by prayer and fasting." If prayer is good, then more prayer is better. If earnest prayer pleases God, then sometimes, surely, He is pleased when the prayer is so earnest that we do not want food nor drink nor sleep nor any other ordinary pleasure. If God is pleased for us to seek Him, then sometimes, surely, it pleases Him for us to lay aside every weight, abstain from everything that might absorb our energy and interest and thought, that we may give ourselves wholly to the matter of prayer. We name here some things that Christians have a right to seek by prayer and fasting; things which God has, in times past given His people because of their prayer with fasting.

1. *Help in time of trouble often comes from fasting and prayer.* God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psa. 50:15). A time of trouble is a good time to pray. If it is a good time to pray, and if the trouble is severe, then it is a good time to fast, too. Joshua and the elders of Israel remained prostrate before the ark of God from morning until evening without eating, after the Israelites were defeated by the men of Ai (Joshua 7:6). It was a time of great distress, of defeat, of shame and of fear. The very destiny of the nation seemed at stake. When they fasted and prayed God showed them the sin that hindered victory. When in the days of the Judges, the eleven tribes of Israel came up against Benjamin by God's command, and when 40,000 were slain in two days "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until the even" (Judges 20:26). In their defeat and sorrow they wept and

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called on God and fasted. God heard and delivered them and the next day gave them victory. Defeat is a fine time to pray with fasting!

When Queen Esther and Mordecai and the Jews in captivity were in danger of being blotted out of the race, they fasted and prayed. Their trouble led to the sincerity and fervor of their praying, such praying that they did not eat nor drink. When Ezra feared the brigands of the wilderness, he called a fast at the river Ahava (Ezra 8:21-23). The time of trouble is a proper time for fasting and prayer.

Let all those who are in trouble call upon God. If they find difficulty in getting an answer from Heaven, then let them fast and pray, sincerely laying everything else aside, as far as necessary, to seek God's face and find His will and blessing.

2. *To find what is wrong, what displeases God, we should sometimes fast and pray.* When Joshua and the elders of Israel did not know why God had allowed them to be defeated by Ai, they fasted and prayed until God showed them the sin of Achan and about the hidden wedge of gold, the silver and the Babylonish garment. Many a Christian who does not prosper could learn the reason if he would wait before God in such sincerity and abandon of self, that he would not eat, would not sleep or would not carry on the regular affairs of life until God revealed what was wrong. One reason for our day of fasting and prayer Sunday at the Fundamental Baptist Church, is that we may know, as far as possible, the full meaning that God has for us in the burning of our church. We want God to lay bare our hearts and show us the things in which He is displeased.

3. *Genuine repentance sometimes involves fasting and prayer.* One may confess his sins without repenting of them. Often, unless we deliberately take time for meditation and examination of our hearts and waiting on God, we have no real sense of sin, no genuine horror at our guilt. I know that in order to be saved, one may turn immediately to Christ, as soon as he knows himself a sinner and knows that Christ died for him, if he will. But alas, many times those of us who are already saved have trouble turning our hearts away from sin! I believe that in Bible times God's saints often took time to fast and wait before God in order that they might genuinely, with contrite heart, forsake their sins and mourn over them. In Zechariah 12:10-14 we are told how at the second coming of Christ, the Jews will mourn over Christ "as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." And that mourning in Jerusalem over their sins will be as great as the mourning in the valley of Megiddon over the dead! Every family will mourn apart and the wives apart. This evidently pictures the broken heart of people who long to turn away from their sins and who take time to see the enormity of their sin in rejecting the Saviour. We are commanded, "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:9, 10). I know God is merciful and ready to forgive instantly all who sincerely turn in the heart to Him. But I too know that oftentimes our pretended turning to God is insincere and shallow, with no real sorrow for sin, no effort at restitution, and no genuine change in attitude of heart. The ghastly wickedness of sin is hidden from us light-hearted moderns. Surely often it would please God if we take time apart to search our hearts and find what displeases God and wholly forsake, as far as we can consciously do so, our sins. If we spend enough time in prayer we can learn the meaning of the old song, "Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly dove, Sweet messenger of rest I hate the sins that made Thee mourn, And drove Thee from my breast."

Fasting will help us to break up the fallow ground of our hearts.

4. *Fasting and prayer often lead to victory over sin.* The world has many Christians who have trusted

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

WHY FAST AND PRAY?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Christ, who sincerely love Him, who are going to Heaven—yet Christians who have no daily victory over sin. Everywhere I go I find Christians who say they cannot quit cigarettes, they cannot control their tempers, they have trouble in surrendering even enough to give God regularly the tithe. Christians find it hard to forgive one another and are constantly falling under the temptation of Satan. Is there victory for such Christians? Yes, there is, but sometimes it is found only in the time of fasting and prayer, waiting on God and laying aside every weight, every duty, every pleasure that might interfere with our whole-hearted prayers. Many times I have seen things happen in protracted seasons of prayer that would not happen in the ordinary course of events. In an all night prayer meeting, a number of men including a young preacher gave up tobacco. One Christian man confessed to his pastor his sin of enmity and gossip. A grown son, now on the foreign mission field, confessed to his violent temper and mistreatment of his mother, and gained courage to right the wrong he had done. In days of fasting and prayer, when God is put first, when the heart has been searched, when sins have been confessed, when restitution has been made, when one's will is surrendered to God, then God has often done great things for the penitent beggar who waits before Him. We need not think that our hunger gains any favor with God. No, God has abundant mercy for all our needs, and we cannot, need not, buy it. But on the other hand, God does want sin-

cerity and fervor and single-heartedness in our praying. Every Christian, I think, should occasionally fast and pray, waiting before God until he gets the victory that he needs. I remember with great joy one night when I waited before God alone in my room until 1:30 begging God for victory over some things in my own life, and begging also for the power of the Spirit on the revival in which I was engaged. And God heard and answered in both matters, gloriously. If you do not have victory over sin, then wait before God, and pay whatever price is necessary to secure His favor and the assurance of His help.

5. *Heavenly wisdom received in prayer and fasting.* In Acts 13:1-3 we have a remarkable incident showing how men who fasted and prayed got direct leadership of the Holy Spirit. Here is that sweet passage:

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:1-3).

Notice that "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted," the Holy Ghost told them who to send, that is, Barnabas and Saul. Notice again, "when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Twice in that short passage we are told that these prophets and teachers fasted. They fasted first as they prayed for wisdom. They fasted second, as they prayed for power upon these men they were sending forth as the first foreign missionaries in New Testament times. And when these men laid their hands

upon the heads of Paul and Barnabas, and sent them away, they were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost." And marvelous wonders attended their ministry! We, too, could have plain leading, we could know the will of God, we could have a plain path for our feet, if we were willing to wait before the Lord, ministering unto Him, fasting and praying! You have a problem about raising your family, about making a living, about where you should serve for Christ, about what course you should take in some particular matter; does not God hear your prayer for wisdom? Do you have doubts and troubles and no assurance of mind? Then why not just set a time and wait before God until you get the answer? If it takes fasting as well as praying, if it takes giving up other matters, then do it and get the blessing that God has for you. You can find the will of God if you seek it sincerely, unstintedly and without limit, in fasting and prayer.

6. *Intercession for others is answered when we fast and pray.* Most of our praying is for ourselves. Yet every Christian, surely admits his responsibility to pray for others. Do you pray for your pastor? for the editor of *The Sword of the Lord*? for some foreign missionary? Do you pray regularly for some loved one who is unsaved? Do you pray for some one who has asked you to help bear the burden of his load day by day, whatever it is? Well, our own needs take up most of the time in our little, puny, short praying. If you would pray for others, pray happily, pray with assurance that you are heard, then take time to pray through. And any long extended time of fervent prayer, may involve fasting as well as prayer. It takes more than a little short prayer to get away from our own selfishness. We have, each one of us, so many needs that we will not do our duty in praying for others, unless we take an extended time for it, unless we really wait before God long enough to get out of our selfishness and get victory over our own immediate needs. Would you be an intercessor? Do you want to learn to pray for others? Then set aside long periods of time in which to pray, with sufficient time to search your heart, and to know the mind of Christ. Take time without distraction for eating and drinking or sleeping perhaps, and God will surely give you part of the blessed burden that is on Jesus Christ, the burden that is for others.

7. *Holy Spirit power comes in answer to fasting and prayer.* There are many things for which we can pray and at once receive the answer. I believe that a sinner can trust in Christ and be saved at once, without delay. The thief on the cross had only to ask, and he was forgiven. The Publican in the temple had only to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner" and went down to his house justified. I know of no Scripture that teaches that a lost sinner needs to beg and plead and so try to touch the heart of God or afflict himself in order to be saved. When the poor sinful will is ready to surrender and put his trust in Christ, then God is immediately ready to forgive and save. However, though God is instantly willing to forgive the sinner, there are other matters about which we should expect to pray longer. Certainly one of the blessed teachings of the Saviour, emphasized many times, is that we should be persistent in prayer. The widow before the unjust judge prayed again and again (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus, teaching the disciples to pray, first gave them the model prayer called the Lord's prayer, and then told them about the neighbor who came and pounded on the door at midnight saying, "A friend of mine in his journey is come to me and I have nothing to set before him. Lend me three loaves" (Luke 11:1-13). In that case certainly the man asking for bread was asking for it for another who had none. And Jesus told exactly what he meant in that parable when he said in verse thirteen, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Notice the Holy Spirit was given to them "that ASK him." Ask how? Ask like that neighbor who knocked on the door again and

again and even then received only "because of his importunity." That illustrates a Christian begging God for bread to take to sinners, or, in other words, praying for the power of the Holy Spirit to make him a soul winner! And the word "ask," I understand, is in the imperfect or continuing tense, in the Greek, and it means to them that keep on asking God will give the Holy Spirit.

Certainly before Pentecost, the disciples "continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). And otherwise, I feel sure they would not have received the blessings that God gave them. They prayed, but they more than prayed, they begged God. That isn't all. They doubtless fasted as well. Jesus had said about His disciples, "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:35). Jesus had just been taken away, and now the disciples, children of the bride-chamber, fasted as they prayed and begged God for the power to get about His business! They prayed, yes, but they fasted as they prayed. I do not know that it specially matters just that they did without food. What matters is that they turned their hearts wholly, unreservedly, and without interruption, to the business of getting all the power God had for them, and being possessed and covered and filled with the Holy Spirit Himself!

When Peter came to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his household, Cornelius said to him, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house . . ." (Acts 10:30). Perhaps that is part of the secret as to why Cornelius and his household were filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time they were saved. This is the only specific instance on record in the Bible, as far as I know, where people were filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time they were saved. Evidently all the heart searching, all the surrendering of the will, all the confession of sin, all the yielding of the heart that was necessary for Cornelius to be filled with the Holy Spirit was already done by the time he learned how to be saved!

When Paul was converted he fasted and prayed three days and nights before he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Ready carefully the 9th chapter of Acts and you will see that Paul was converted as described in verses 4 and 5. Verse 9 tells that he went three days without sight, "and neither did eat nor drink." The angel told Ananias, "behold, he prayeth," in verse 11. Those three days of fasting and prayer fitted Paul to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and in verse 17 we learn that Ananias went to him, sent by the Lord, "that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Certainly fasting and prayer are appropriate for Christians who want to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let us turn again to the sending forth of Barnabas and Paul in Acts 13:1-4. These prophets and teachers fasted until they knew the will of God. Then they fasted and prayed further, until they could lay their hands upon Paul and Barnabas in power and they could go away "being sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

It was the experience of D. L. Moody, of R. A. Torrey, of Charles G. Finney as it has been of many other Christians greatly used in soul winning, that they were filled with the Holy Spirit after a long season of waiting before God, finding the will of God, surrendering self, being molded on God's potter's wheel.

Dear Christian, if you want help in trouble, then pray and if the answer does not come easily and soon, fast and pray. Fasting and prayer by which we mean whole-hearted, surrendered, fervent, determined praying will help you to find what is wrong, will help you to genuinely repent and turn from sin, will help you to get victory over bad habits, grudges, daily temptation and will help you to find the wisdom of God and leadership of the Holy Spirit and help you to intercede for others and will open the way for you to receive the power of the Holy Spirit in abundance.

Dear child of God, do you feel led to try it? Then fast and pray till God meets you in blessing.

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